



special
collections
DOUGLAS
Library



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

PAX IN BELLO;

OR, A

FEW REFLEXIONS

ON THE

PROSPECT of PEACE,

ARISING

OUT of the PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

OF THE

W A R.

Justum et tenacem propositi Virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis Tyranni,
Mente quatit solidâ.

LONDON:

Printed for J. OWEN, No. 168, Piccadilly.

1796.

AC 911.1796.139

TO the READER.

THE following Reflexions were first communicated to the Public through the channel of a Morning Paper.—The object of their Author cannot be mistaken—To support the public Spirit of the Country at this critical Emergency—To avert an ignominious, and to pave the way to an honorable Peace—The probable means of avoiding the one, and securing the other, are discussed without reserve.—Reasons of State may oblige Ministers to confine their Resolutions to the Cabinet—May their result, however, accord with the principles of these Observations! —The Glory of it will be their own; but an obscure Individual will feel, no less than the greatest Statesman, the glowing exultations of national Honor and public Happiness.

PAX IN BELLO.

THE King's Declarations to Parliament, of his readiness to negotiate with the Enemy, are before the world ; and assurances, as unequivocal as satisfactory, have been given by Administration, of their disposition and earnest desire to conclude a *General Peace*.— I shall make these the ground-work of a few observations that have occurred to me, not quite unimportant, perhaps, in the present moment.

Two questions will engage my attention :

First, Is there a disposition in the present Government of France, fairly and *bonâ fide* to meet the avowed wish of this country for a *General Pacification* ? Second, On the suppo-
B sition

sition that such a disposition exists, and should be manifested by the French, what are the probabilities of it's being brought to a speedy and satisfactory issue?

This discussion will naturally lead to the terms which the principal Coalesced Powers will expect from France, and the prospect which their situation and resources, compared to those of the enemy, afford of their just expectations in this respect being satisfied.

Many circumstances, arising in part out of the characters and acknowledged sentiments of the leading men in France, and in part out of the nature and form of their government, induce me to believe that the ideas of those who found their hopes of Peace on the moderation and humanity of the enemy will prove illusory; and that the only solid and reasonable grounds of expectation are in the extent of our resources, and in the penurious and exhausted condition of our adversary.

Without laying the detail of this consolatory contrast before the public, I trust I shall find every impartial reader disposed to admit the general fact; more will not be required to establish the inferences to be drawn from it.

We

We are anxious for Peace, but when I add, that we are not distressed to procure all the means of energetic war, few will be found to contradict my proposition ; and yet perhaps the conviction of it's accuracy arises from a view of things in some particulars different from that which led me to this induction.— On the other hand, when I estimate the means of the Enemy as inadequate to the permanent efforts which the continuance of hostilities will require from them, I think it will be agreed on all sides, that their expedients are precarious, and not likely to be successful for any considerable length of time.—It would be more pleasing to indulge in the hopes of immediate negotiation, and to see all parties equally inclined to meet on the principles of moderation and equity:—Every obstacle to this most desirable event must be traced to the ambition and inadmissible pretensions of the French—to them alone will all the calamities which must attend a prolongation of the War be imputable, if, as I believe, they should compel us to forego all expectations of a speedy and honorable Peace, except those which

which may result from a vigorous prosecution of the War.

These general remarks are drawn from the present appearance of affairs, which I shall endeavour to illustrate by the language and conduct of the Enemy, and their situation, compared to that of Great Britain and it's Allies. It never was of greater importance that they should be fully known to the Public, who, over-sanguine, from misapprehension of the King's Message, have lately formed expectations, not warranted by circumstances. These expectations would lead to disappointment, and disappointment to despondency, and pusillanimous concession, if not properly counteracted. Ministers should be much on their guard, that their meaning is not thus mistaken, if, as I am persuaded, they are really anxious to obtain a good and honorable Peace. Without being acquainted with their plans, I certainly share this sentiment; and, urged by it's impulse, I will communicate my opinions, unrestrained by any other consideration than those which must actuate every Englishman, when the dignity and welfare of his country are at stake.

I have

I have already expressed my apprehensions, that there does not exist, on the part of the Enemy, a disposition to treat for a General Peace, in the manner pointed out in His Majesty's Message.

Nothing can, however, be more distant from my intentions, than to insinuate that the French Government does not forcibly feel all the difficulties and embarrassments of War, and a proportionate anxiety for its termination. Whatever description of men may now be at the head of affairs in France, it is impossible to suppose, that they should not more or less connect the continuance of their power, and the permanency and stability of their arrangements, with the cessation of those violent and convulsive efforts, by which supplies are procured.

The influence of this consideration, in the decisions of France, depends on the views and sentiments of the existing Government.

The persons who opposed the forced reelection of two-thirds of the Convention, and were well-wishers to the Sections of *Paris* in their late glorious struggle, form what I shall call *the Moderate Party*. Crushed on the

5th and 6th of October last, its leading Members have been excluded from the Councils of the Republic, and from all participation in the Executive Directory ; but it is not useless here to recal their opinions on the great question of Peace and War, inasmuch as they will throw a considerable light on those of their successful adversaries. They were convinced that the restitution of their conquests was indispensably necessary to the speedy return of Peace ; that this restitution would be attended with no disgrace, provided the Liberty and independence of the French Republic were acknowledged by the Coalesced Powers. This last point they considered as the object of the War, and the accomplishment of that object as the criterion of a secure and honourable Peace.—If this Party had been more fortunate, an event so very desirable might now have been in a train of Negotiation.

What, on the other hand, are the avowed sentiments of the prevailing Faction ? A determination to keep their conquests ; and, for this end, wickedly to persevere in the War, under the expectation, that the pressure of its calamities will soon be so severely felt by the
Combined

Combined Powers, as to force them to confirm, by a Treaty, this monstrous aggrandizement of their Republic.—Every step of the present Government has evinced their resolution not to depart from this System. The well-disposed People of France, knowing this to be their determination, appear no longer to indulge in the prospect of a speedy Pacification. They are not ignorant of our resources, and must be sensible, that an absolute inability to continue the contest, can alone induce us to submit to such Terms. The natural inference to be drawn from this state of things (liable, however, to many modifications, but certainly fully applicable to the present posture of affairs,) is, that the War must be carried on till one of the contending Parties has consumed every adequate means of continuing it, and then, that the ruined Power must receive the terms which the other may be pleased to dictate. Both are wearied and anxious to give over, but not exhausted. The charge of criminal ambition rests solely with our Enemy; and I hesitate not to predict, that it will end in their complete disappointment. In vain the Directory will have recourse to the plunder of
private

private Property, and to every odious expedient of the System of Terror. The full proof of the insufficiency of these means may be found in their own official statements.—Do they suppose we can be duped and misled by the arrogant and menacing language in which these humiliating avowals of their weakness are conveyed to the Public? Is Austria to be terrified into a degrading Treaty by their haughty and indecent behaviour to Count *Carletti*? In vain do they attempt to stigmatize the Advocates for Peace and Moderation by the name of *La Faction des Anciens Limites*. These unfortunate friends to their country are become the objects of their persecution. Do they expect, by this barbarous policy, to convince and overawe Europe? Convinced we may be of their pertinacious adherence to their absurd and inadmissible schemes, but indignation, and not fear, spirited unanimity and perseverance, and not shameful despondency and submission, will be the result of that conviction. Europe may learn, by several recent diplomatic appointments, the determination of the Directory to place their future Negotiations in the hands of pure *Jacobins*, resolved to listen to no
alternative,

alternative, *but Peace on their own terms, or War.* But Europe may refuse to treat with such *Jacobins*; and I hope soon to satisfy every unprejudiced person, that such will naturally be the conduct of the Allies, until France shall have departed from her lofty and preposterous pretensions, of which every intimation is an insult to Two great Powers, who have firmly resolved to make a joint and honourable Peace their common object.—The one, Master of the Sea, having reduced under it's dominion the most important Colonies in the World, possessed of immense pecuniary resources:—The other, victorious on the *Rhine*, and diligently providing it's numerous Armies with every means of improving their brilliant and rapid successes.—Both just and moderate in their views, united in their efforts, and rivals only in ardour and emulation. Who can doubt that they will remain inseparable in this glorious pursuit, until they shall have compelled the Enemy to sue for terms, consistent with the dignity of their Crowns, the lasting interests and security of their possessions, and the permanent tranquillity of Europe?

The late communications from *Paris* have confirmed the apprehensions I entertained of the disposition of the French Government with respect to the King's Message.

The insulting language of the Papers under the influence of the Directory, accords very ill with any prospects of Peace; and the principal use made by their injured adversaries, of the little Liberty of the Press which still remains in France, is, to lament the inevitable continuance of the War, and the certain misery and calamities which it must bring on their devoted Country.—“ To re-create our Navy, to recruit
 “ our Armies, to find supplies for at least
 “ another Campaign, are the objects (says one
 “ of their Papers) which must now engage
 “ our attention.”—A difficult, if not an impracticable undertaking! Let us recollect, that our Navy flourishes beyond all former example; that the Austrian Battalions are not mouldered away by desertion, or inefficient from want of recruits; that our Supplies for the year are provided; that pecuniary aid can be furnished to our Ally, without embarrassment, or diminution of credit: and having thus compared these our relative situations, let

us

us have a proper sense of the immense superiority of our own resources, and feel, as we ought to do, the overbearing insolence of an Enemy, pretending to dictate terms, to which, though as much reduced as themselves, it would be infamy to listen, and ruin to submit.

If the Plans of the French Government may be judged of by their official proceedings, they correspond so exactly to my conception and statement of their intentions, that I cannot help noticing them on this occasion: — *Another Campaign, brilliant and decisive, or Peace on our own terms.* — Such is the substance of their Letter to the Minister of War, on the suspension of arms, which a laudable desire to avoid the bloody skirmishing, and harrassing fatigue of Patroles and Out-posts, appears to have dictated to the Generals on the *Rhine*, on sending the hostile Armies into Winter-quarters. I give them full credit for their candid and obliging assurance, that they are willing to grant Peace to Europe on their own terms; but I see little reason to apprehend that they are efficiently prepared for the other alternative, on which, however, they appear firmly resolved; modestly condescending to inform us, at

the same time, that it is not their intention to require “ Terms destructive of the safety of
 “ other Powers, but such only as are consist-
 “ ent with the interest of those Powers *well*
 “ *understood.*” — If any one is at a loss to know what these Gentlemen mean by the interests of Europe *well understood*, they may find an explanation in the Minister *Merlin’s* Report for annexing the Netherlands to France, in which he ingenuously asserts, that Nature has assigned the *Rhine* for the Boundary of the Republic, and *Paris* for its Capital, as being, by this extension of it’s limits, nearly in a centrical position; and if he should not be satisfied by this very *natural* logic of the first Chancellor of the new Republic, let him read *Carnot’s* opinion on the same subject, who more honestly and plainly proves, that, by uniting the Netherlands to France, her resistance would be rendered for ever secure, and her attacks irresistible.

The joint eloquence of the Lawyer and the Soldier carried the Decree of Re-union, and as a reward for their exertions, the one is placed in the Ministry, and the other sits in the Directory, with four other Colleagues; no less
 strenuous

strenuous than himself in their support of this very *natural* measure; but *natural and well-understood* as it may appear to them, it will require at least all the arguments of a *very brilliant Campaign*, to convince the Powers of Europe, that they ought, on this occasion, to make these enlightened and impartial Sovereigns the arbiters of their respective interests, without presuming to think or reason for themselves.

I shall not dwell any longer on the avowed hostile disposition of the Enemy; but, as sooner or later they must either make or receive overtures of Peace, it becomes interesting to endeavour to collect, from their opinions and conduct, in what manner they would probably proceed under each of these contingencies.

Should the first steps towards *Negotiation* be made by the French, it must be evident to every observer of events, that they will endeavour, by all possible expedients, to disunite the Allies, and by negotiating with them separately, to attain, in the partial advantages of each unconnected Treaty, a result conformable to the Plan they have chalked out for a general Pacification.

On

On the other hand, the engagements of this Country, and the interest of Europe, require of the Administration to refuse all overtures which have not for their object a General Peace. With an interest at stake infinitely greater, the Emperor is bound by the same engagements, and would, I am persuaded, equally with ourselves, reject all insidious proposals for partial Negotiation.

This difficulty, I have always considered as the greatest obstacle to the commencement of Negotiation.

From the temper of the French Government, I am afraid, it will continue to impede this desirable event, after several others shall have been removed. It is for want of a sufficient consideration of the distinct and different interests of the contending Parties in a point so very material, and of their opposite conduct and declarations, founded on this essential difference, that the expectations of Peace, which were the first result of the King's Message, appear to me to have been so much over-rated, in the opinion of the Public of this Country, and of Europe.

Some

Some were induced to hope and believe that a Negotiation was actually in train—Others, that some explanation had been had with the Enemy, who had required this ostensible declaration as a preliminary to an amicable arrangement already agreed upon.—All were of opinion, that the Message, as relating to a *General Peace*, had been concerted with our Allies, and made public with their concurrence ; and no one had the least doubt that it had effectually removed the chief, if not the only obstacle to an immediate Peace.

Instead of these pleasing illusions, the truth is, that the King, by stating that the nature of the present Government would no longer be an insurmountable bar to all Negotiation, has certainly rendered it practicable, as soon as either Party shall determine to have recourse to this desirable measure ; but the numerous difficulties by which it might be retarded or prevented, remain in their full force, and have been considerably augmented by the conduct of France since the Message was delivered.

It is so far from my intention to undervalue the true importance of this Message, that I have no hesitation to say, that if the *Moderate*
Party

Party had prevailed, His Majesty's pacific Intentions would have been joyfully met by similar intentions on their part; and this happy disposition on both sides might, by this period, have had it's full and salutary effect; for their principles and views would have coincided with the wishes and just expectations of Europe. By the present *Party*, the Message has probably been received with great concern, inasmuch as it must attach to them alone, in the consideration of the suffering People of France, and in the opinion of every Englishman, the charge of the prolongation of the War, and thereby, on the one hand, weaken their authority, and, on the other, give to our efforts additional union and energy.

Mr. Pitt's Declaration in Parliament, that the Message was not in contemplation when he contracted for the Loan, is a proof that our Allies had not been consulted on the occasion, and consequently Administration could not be prepared to make, or answer any specific proposals for a general Pacification, which, if they should originate with us, must necessarily be previously considered and concerted with our Allies; and for the same reason, if
coming

coming from our Enemy, can only be received as a communication on which the opinions of the Allies would be taken. Since the delivery of the Message, I know no difference between the principle of the present and any former War with France; which I consider as the only real change it has effected.

How long this approach towards a Pacification may be counteracted by the present Rulers of France, I cannot pretend to say; but they are so committed by their unwary and violent proceedings, that any favourable change of measures must be the effect of compulsion alone, and will probably be the result of a failure in their resources—. Under the present circumstances, I see no other reasonable chance of Peace.

The Directory and the Majority of both the Councils of the Republic have acquired power by flattering the passions of the Mob and the Army, and courting their applause and support, in opposition to the Landed and Monied Interest of the Empire; and, unfortunately, with these instruments, they have, in every instance, met with success—But the consequence is, that they stand pledged to their
D friends,

friends, and bound by their opinions and past conduct, to be governed and directed by the same doctrines; and from habit, inclination, or the pride of appearing consistent, they still court the applause and good-will of the Populace, inflame their passions, and particularly that zeal for aggrandizement, plunder, and false glory, which is so easily grafted on an Army long victorious, and still more easily diffused through a People agitated by enthusiasm, and all the vicissitudes and torments of a Revolution.

A deluded Populace, who has nothing at stake, cares not if the whole Property of the Country is sacrificed to a mistaken principle of National Honour.

The glory of extending the Republic to the *Rhine*, is the boon of every *Jacobin*, who, trusting to the spirited perseverance of his friends in the Directory, enjoys daily his share of their imaginary triumph.

This obstacle to a restitution of their Conquests, the *sine qua non* of Peace, inherent to the form and nature of their Government, is no small addition to the difficulties of a General Pacification,

In

In the present situation of affairs, and with the disposition manifested by the Enemy, it appears impossible to indulge in the hope of a speedy Negotiation, and consequently it becomes our interest and our duty once more to rally round the Standard of War, not with a view of preserving ourselves from the contagion of Revolutionary Principles, nor to prevent or assist in the establishment of any particular Government in France, but to oblige her to restore her conquests, and to return within her former limits.

This is a just, irresistible, and pressing motive for the continuance of hostilities. That the Netherlands should be recovered, that Holland should not be in the direct dependence, and under the immediate controul of France, are conditions indispensable to the safety and commercial interests of this Country; to the repose of Europe, which would otherwise be at the mercy of an overgrown Republic, governed by Jacobins, and (what would be still more alarming) actuated by the spirit of conquest. The examples of Confiscation and Plunder, the contagion of Revolutionary Doctrines, the fanaticism of the Rights

of Man, once appeared an almost irresistible torrent, destroying, in it's rapid progress, all social distinctions, and every advantage derived from property and civilization. It's course has been stopped by energy and perseverance. Let us act with the same spirit in the present instance, and the Barriers which guard the Balance of Power, and the Political Independence of the North of Europe, will ultimately be replaced in their former positions; and though there is reason to apprehend that we are at some distance from the attainment of this point, and that it must be carried *sword in hand*, the consideration of the terms which this Country and it's Allies might expect, and ought to require, on the supposition of an immediate Negotiation, is certainly an interesting subject of investigation.

The conditions to be procured for our Allies on the Continent will form the first part of our enquiry, and may be discussed separately from the terms which relate to Colonies and distant Possessions, in which England is more immediately concerned.

It cannot be denied, that a general anxiety for Peace prevails in this and every other
Country

Country engaged in the contest against France ; that it is much increased by the present scarcity of provisions, and by the daily pressure of the accumulated calamities, inseparable from a state of War.

Under these circumstances, it is the duty of the several Powers to concur in the wishes of their Subjects, and to restore them to the blessings of Peace, as soon as it can be effected, without the sacrifice of the honour and permanent interests of their respective States : But it is a duty, no less essential to the character of a Statesman, more arduous to fulfil without indiscretion, and rendered infinitely more requisite by the temper of the Enemy, to resist, in a firm and prudent manner, the interested clamours of Party, and the obstreperous impatience of the inconsiderate Multitude.—The momentary loss of popularity is attended with too many unpleasant consequences to be an object of indifference to any Minister ; but if he be upright, and equal to the difficulties of his situation, he will never put it in competition with a steady adherence to the line of conduct he will necessarily trace out for himself on every great occasion, and in this
he

he will be guided by his own judgment, aided and directed by a sense of duty, and of the importance of the trust reposed in him.

I freely own, that the opinion I entertain of the Administration of this Country, and of the Cabinet of Vienna, is not inferior to my conception of their task in this respect; and with a full confidence that it will be well and faithfully performed, I have no hesitation to say, that it cannot be so, and that they will justly forfeit every claim to gratitude and esteem, if the unlimited restitution of all the principal Conquests of France in Europe be not made the leading feature and invariable principle of all Negotiation relative to the Pacification of the Continent.

I do not wish to be understood, that we must require the strict *Status quo ante Bellum*, because I should lament to see the War protracted for the possession of a paltry Village, or a few miserable acres on the Frontier, which, from particular situation, or other circumstances, might peculiarly affect the interests, or suit the convenience of either party; but France cannot be allowed to retain any considerable territorial Conquest of great extent,
produce,

produce, and population, important by it's resources, and infinitely more so by it's situation with respect to commercial advantages, and military and naval power. Such are the Netherlands, and the contiguous Countries and Fortresses which have been annexed to the French Republic. Their vast consequence in the Balance of Power, considered under each of these heads, is so forcibly felt by all the Northern States of Europe, and has been the foundation and origin of so many Alliances, Disputes, Wars, and Treaties, that it cannot be necessary to dwell long on a subject, which makes so conspicuous a part of Modern History, and in which the Maritime and Commercial Powers (and England in particular) will almost always be found to have taken a leading and principal concern.

An impartial appeal to the uniform conduct of our Ancestors, will convince every unprejudiced man of the importance of the object at stake — Any detailed illustration of this great Political Truth, is an undertaking to which I am unequal, and, moreover, too extensive for the present occasion; I shall therefore confine myself to a few observations, to
 prove

prove that the motives which rendered the Netherlands so principal an object in War and Peace, and of so much weight in all former Treaties, are fully applicable to the present situation of affairs, and particularly with a reference to the interests of this Country.

The Netherlands, and the conquered Countries annexed to the French Republic, by the Decree of the Convention of the 1st of October, 1795, may be considered either as subservient to Power, or as conducive to the purposes and advantages of Navigation and Commerce.

France, from it's position, compactness, and several other natural advantages, aided and ameliorated by it's fortifications, and the numerous improvements of art, was possessed, even within the confines of it's former limits, of a preponderance, as a Military Power, in the balance of Europe, which, for more than a century, it has been very difficult effectually to oppose and counteract—an object in which the other great Continental Powers must certainly have failed, in some former War, if they had not been, from time to time, supported by the pecuniary resources of this Country and of Holland. Every well-wisher

to the permanent tranquillity of Europe must regret, that this support, and all the exertions which it has occasionally called forth, have not completely prevented the aggrandizement of the French Empire, since the Peace of *Utrecht*. It's acquisitions, however, though far from unimportant, are not to be compared with it's present pretensions, rendered, by the accession of strength derived from these same acquisitions, and by the present relative situations of France and Holland, infinitely more inadmissible, than at any of the former periods in which they have been opposed by this Country.

It would be an useless repetition of facts, known to every man not totally unacquainted with the history of Flanders, to state, that it abounds in all the productions, and possesses every advantage, which contribute to the wealth and prosperity of a Country in time of Peace, and to its resources and vigour in time of War — fertility of soil, population, manufactures, commerce, industry, public establishments, fortifications, and positions invaluable either for attack or defence, rivers, and facilities for communication, and every other purpose mili-

E

tary

tary and commercial.—These, and many other advantages equally important, and incalculable in their consequences, would be placed at the disposal of France, by any Treaty which left her in possession of the conquered Countries, and of the fortresses ceded by the Dutch, by their late Treaty with that Power. These cessions, which include Maestricht, Venloo, Dutch Flanders, and the right side of the Hondt, were certainly necessary to the permanent security of their conquests, and were evidently required, with a view to the completion of that plan of aggrandizement, to which they vainly expect the Belligerent Powers will be compelled to submit. Masters, by their dismemberment of Holland, of the mouth of the Scheldt, they are thereby possessed of an excellent and secure harbour at the extremity of the Channel opposite to the Thames, and superior to every other situation for the protection or annoyance of Trade in the Downs, or in the North Seas. In Maestricht and Venloo they have the keys of Holland, and the undisturbed possession of the Meuse; and even if these two fortresses were restored to the Dutch, as long as the French should retain Flanders, they
would

would still be in their immediate dependence ; and, by this dependence, the resources of the United Provinces would remain, as they now are, entirely at the disposal of France. It will not require much political sagacity, to estimate the effects of their *proconsular* ascendancy over the Government of the United Provinces, combined with their *sovereign* authority over all the Emperor's possessions on the left banks of the Rhine ; although some of the inevitable consequences might be more or less retarded by the peculiar circumstances in which France will probably find herself at the conclusion of a Peace ; and particularly those which would, nevertheless, in a short time, most materially and fatally affect the Commercial Intercourse and Maritime Power of this Kingdom. Motives of policy, interest, or necessity, founded on the annihilation of trade and capitals in France, or other very urgent grounds, may induce them to suffer us to trade with the Ports of Holland and Flanders for a few years ; but that intercourse must depend entirely, as to its nature, extent and duration, on their good will and pleasure ; must be tributary to their power and government, and will be

hampered by such arbitrary restrictions, as they will gradually impose, until they can exclude us from it altogether. We should then be deprived of our beneficial and extensive Commerce with Flanders, the greatest part of Germany, and the North of Europe, and confined in our connexions with those parts of the world, to a precarious intercourse with the Ports of the Weser and the Elbe, or Ports still less conveniently situated—Competition with the French and Dutch would be found impossible—They would become not only the carriers of the productions we might have to dispose of, but the regulators of the market in which they would be sold.

Let those, who, from presumption and ignorance, tell the People of this Country that we ought not to interfere, or take any concern in the affairs of the Continent, meditate on these great truths, and the inevitable consequences, to which the adoption of their errors would infallibly lead. Whenever this pernicious doctrine is presented to the Public, by men possessed of great talents, brilliantly employed in the investigation and discussion of the public concerns of their Country and of Europe, I am more disposed
to

to suspect their sincerity than their understanding; and the regret I feel, that a spirit of Party, or the pursuit of Popularity, should induce them to impede the attainment of points which no Administration can relinquish, is mixed with a just indignation, arising from the encouragement they thereby afford the Enemy to persevere in their pretensions.—I hesitate not to declare, that there is no Party in this Kingdom, which, in power, would dare to propose Peace with France on the terms in question; and I challenge those who affect to ascribe the continuance of the War to the ambitious and hostile views of the present Administration, to deny the assertion.

The unfortunate effects which would arise from the precarious dependence of so precious and considerable a proportion of our European Trade on the will of the French and Dutch, and its consequent gradual decay, would soon be felt in the diminution of our credit, our resources, and of our weight and influence on the Continent, and in the affairs of *Europe*.

These calamities, inevitable from the nature of things, under the supposition of the Cession of the *Netherlands*, would soon be followed by an
 innumerable

innumerable train of national misfortunes, proportioned in their magnitude to the present immense extent of our interior and external Trade, our Manufactures, Industry, and Resources of every description—All these advantages afford a mutual support to each other, and on the support and preservation of the whole depend the stability of our Credit, and the solidity of our Public Debt.

If we enquired into the first great, and, I trust, durable source of our flourishing condition, every true Englishman will trace it to the *Constitution*; but under it, our present prosperity is the result of the happy accord, just proportion, and relative influence and extension of all the abovementioned causes, seconded and improved by judicious regulations, aided by sagacious arrangements, enterprising speculations, ingenious improvements, and that public spirit, which, in every part of the world, is considered as the honourable characteristic of the industrious and commercial part of the British Community. The political and commercial Existence of this Country may be compared to the working of a stupendous and complicated machine, astonishing the spectators
by

by the harmony and regularity of its structure, the correctness of its movements, the just and admirable proportion between its effects and the causes by which they are produced; but so delicate in its interior parts, that none can be materially altered, suspended, or withdrawn, without deranging and ultimately destroying these happy results. In such a machine, how many efficient springs, important to the preservation of the whole, may escape the common observer's eye, which are, at the same time, objects of unremitting care and attention to its well-informed, judicious, and upright Directors?

The importance to this Country of not suffering *Flanders* and *Holland* to remain in the hands or dependence of the French, is, I hope, satisfactorily established in the opinion of every impartial man.

Passion, Prejudice, or a rash desire to stipulate for an immediate Peace, may have led some to a different conclusion. Should their intentions be honest, these observations may perhaps induce them to reconsider the subject. But if they are the blind slaves of Faction; the devoted and irretrievable Zealots of French Systems;

or

or pusillanimous Egotists, coldly sacrificing the future grandeur and interests of their Country to momentary and insecure repose ; adhering to their opinions, let them triumph in the expectation of retarding an honourable arrangement, by every obstacle and impediment which can raise the hopes of the Enemy, or thwart the just pursuits of Government.—Let them triumph in the infatuated delusion, that this extension of French Power will give countenance and support to Revolutionary Doctrines ; pave the way to the subversion of all distinctions of Rank and Property ; and, finally, lead to the great object of their pursuits—the destruction of *Monarchy* and *Christianity*, and the division of *Europe* into Republics founded on the *Rights of Man*.—Let them triumph in their ignominious disregard of Public Faith and National Honor ; in their profligate indifference to the dearest interests of Posterity ; and in the contemptible gratification of those selfish passions, which they basely prefer to the generous dictates of Public Spirit. These triumphs shall be exclusively their own—unenvied by all who cannot share them, and abhorred by every Englishman, who wishes, with consistent judgment

ment and manly pride, to walk in the paths of his Ancestors, and to look forward, as they did, to provide for the happiness of future generations.

The grounds on which I have hitherto contended against the aggrandizement of *France*, form but an inconsiderable part of the motives for strenuously resisting every proposal to that effect. Most of the arguments I have adduced, are taken from commercial considerations, and applicable only to the state of peace and of good understanding between *France* and *England*.—However serious the prospect may appear, under this contingency, it will be found infinitely more alarming, if we look forward to the renewal of hostilities. The French and Dutch would be studiously employed, during the interval of Peace, in distressing our Commerce, and proportionally extending their own—in re-establishing and increasing their Naval Force—in completing and improving their new Harbours opposite to the British Coasts—in cementing their Union so as to combine their efforts, and render their joint exertions as efficient as if they were directed by one Government. Most great coalitions have failed, because the principal ends for which they were

F

formed,

formed, have been sacrificed by some of their Members to their petty jealousies, secret views, or separate interests; but in the present case there would exist a strict unity both of Power and Interest.—Of Power, because the *French* Government has a supreme ascendancy over that of *Holland*—Of Interest, because, as long as the Councils of the *United Provinces* shall be governed by *France*, it will be their first object, as Maritime and Commercial Powers, to deprive *England* of its Naval Superiority. Unequal as they now appear, in any respect, to contend with us for the Empire of the Sea, it would appear, by a late Message of the Executive Directory, that, in their wild presumption, they entertain hopes of not terminating the present War, until they shall have avenged their disasters at *Toulon*, the defeats of the 1st of June, 1794, and the 23d of June, 1795.—Let any *Englishman* take up the abovementioned Message, and read in it—

“ *That every effort shall be made to fit out Squadrons, competent to meet and conquer their cruel and implacable Enemy, whose perfidious Politics justify their hatred, and call for exemplary vengeance.—That this is the object of all their hopes—the end of all their efforts—the cry heard*
from

from every part of the Republic. That it is by accomplishing this object that they will procure for France a Peace, such as they have a right to expect, founded on the defeat and humiliation of their Maritime Rival." * He is unworthy of his Country, if it does not excite in him the strongest feelings of contempt and indignation; for it never can be congenial to the British Character to be terrified into submission by this pitiful outrage, which will lead us to shew our resentment, not by a vain imitation of the insignificant menaces of our Enemy, but by a steady resolution never to depart from our just pretensions, and cheerfully to bear such farther sacrifices as may be necessary, finally to subdue the perverse and uncontrolled ambition of the French Republic.—Any immediate expectation of meeting us at sea appears so preposterous, that I can only attribute their language, in this respect, to an unguarded indulgence of a passion, which, on too many occasions, has influenced their Councils—I mean a decided enmity to this Country, apportioned to the vigorous and noble

F 2

efforts,

* See the Message of the Directory to the Council of Five Hundred, on the necessity of re-establishing their Navy.

efforts, by which we have successively opposed their schemes of Revolution and Aggrandizement.

If, by the result of a General Pacification, they could retain their Influence in *Holland*, and obtain the cession of the *Netherlands*, I am convinced that, with these terms, they would be graciously pleased to adjourn the execution of their plan for *humbling their Maritime Rival* until the first renewal of hostilities.

The interval, from the conclusion of a Peace to that period, would, probably, be short, but long enough to enable them to turn to effect the advantages of a Treaty, which would so materially increase the means of improving their Maritime Power. Their extent of coast, opposite to the British shore, would, in that case, reach from *Brest* to the *Texel*, of which all the important harbours, between *Dunkirk* and the last mentioned port, would have been acquired since the commencement of the War; in addition to a considerable number of secondary ports, advantageously situated for fitting out and sheltering Privateers; and for the annoyance of our Trade, they would possess, in the *German* and *North Seas*, not only the *Texel* but *Flushing*,

Flushing, and other valuable harbours formed by the *Scheldt*; and if to these two principal ports they should add *Cherbourg*, which it would then be so much their interest to complete, this line would be rendered most formidable either for attack or defence. It would include four chief ports, all at a very small distance from *England*, and so apportioned in their respective distances from each other, as to give solidity and support to the whole line, and to afford, at the same time, the utmost facility for communication, for collecting their force and combining their operations, and for retreat, in case of defeat or superiority of numbers. It will be easy to draw to these Ports, and particularly to the two situated on the *German Sea*, every means of rapidly establishing a Naval Power. The forests of the conquered Countries, their easy intercourse with the North, the nautical disposition of the *Dutch* and *Flemings*, and the extension of trade, would soon furnish them with every requisite for a powerful Navy. It may be objected that, although *Holland* and the *Netherlands* have been for some time, and still continue, subject to the French Government, none of the inconveniencies

veniencies so much apprehended have been experienced by this Country. This objection will have no weight with those who have carefully attended to the events of the present War, but for the many who have not, it is necessary that it should be properly investigated, and answered; and this consideration will naturally lead to an inquiry into the importance of the *Netherlands*, as the great bond of union between this Country and the Powers at present our Allies, or with which we may hereafter have to co-operate against the ambitious views of *France*; and before we take leave of the supposition, that the *Low Countries* will be ceded to *France*, it will not be foreign to our subject to state, what, under that contingency, might be our situation, in case of a renewal of hostilities. This event ought to be guarded against; but is too probable to be overlooked in a Treaty of Peace, and may take place between *France* and *England*, unsupported by any Ally, or we may act in conjunction with some of the principal Continental Powers. An impartial discussion of either of these circumstances, I am convinced, will only tend to establish and confirm our former conclusions.

Some

Some of the reasons which have prevented the French from deriving any great maritime advantages from *Flanders* and *Holland*, during the present War, are so obvious, that they must occur to every one on the first consideration of the subject. When Flanders was captured, they had three Naval Powers to contend with, and Armies to maintain, vastly superior in numbers to those of all the Powers engaged in the Coalition. Assuredly the last of these contingencies was sufficient to require all the resources of Flanders, which, it must also be observed, could not have been applied with effect to naval objects, until the French were assisted, instead of being counteracted, by Holland. When the United Provinces fell into their hands, they had still to oppose the same pressure from the Continental Powers, and the enormous contributions they levied were applied to the support of their Armies.

The War, moreover, had then been carried on with vigour for two years ; and during these two years, by our unparalleled exertions to augment our Naval Forces, and by a series of successful attacks on those of the French, we had acquired, in this respect, such a decided superiority,

periority, as could not have been easily wrested from us by the Enemy, even if they had not been under the necessity of appropriating to the service of their Armies the additional means and resources procured in Holland.

On their first taking possession of the United Provinces, they were, I suppose, not unaware of these circumstances, and were probably little at liberty to choose between the uncertain and distant project of naval enterprise, and the immediate pressing wants of a victorious and exacting Army. If we revert to the events of last year, to the further destruction and dispersion of their Squadrons, to the great augmentation of British Ships in Commission, to the success of the new expedient for manning them adopted by Parliament, and to the assistance afforded by the co-operation of the Russian Fleet, we shall be convinced, that the Enemy's determination to make their Maritime Power a secondary consideration, was pointed out to them, by the relative circumstances of the two Countries, as the only policy they could pursue at that period of the War.

Europe has witnessed, with astonishment, the efforts of French Tyranny under their
new

new form of Government, and the celerity with which it has enabled them to execute the most gigantic plans. At the commencement of a future rupture, the same despotic authority may still prevail, and may again have recourse to expedients equally violent and irresistible. If it should be a War between France and England alone, (a circumstance by no means improbable, in the supposition of the cession of Holland and the Netherlands) the former, disentangled from all her embarrassments, might then turn it's whole attention to the speedy equipment of a powerful Navy.—For this purpose, their acquisitions of Coast and Territory would certainly afford them every requisite means of executing the most extensive projects which ambition, and a desire to avenge so many late defeats at Sea, can suggest to an active, enterprising, and restless Government, conscious of the uncontrouled magnitude of it's power, and elated by it's extensive conquests.—Whatever glory these conquests may reflect on their victorious Armies must be tarnished by the humiliations of their scattered and vanquished Fleets.

This is a just subject of pride and consolation to England ; but prudence and experience forbid us to indulge in the expectation, that the spirit of a haughty and resentful Rival will be subdued by the mortifying contrast. On the contrary, it would rouse their hatred, and urge them to seize the first opportunity of turning against us the advantages pusillanimously left at their disposal. We should then have tenfold reason to deprecate the truth of an observation, of which we have too often felt the weight in former Wars, where we had only to oppose progressive and regular operations, directed by the feeble and contracted power of the old Government, confined to it's own resources, and to the limits of the Monarchy. The observation to which I allude is, that at the breaking out of a War, the French are in general better prepared for it, and more expeditious than we are, in bringing forward their Forces. If France should find it practicable to equip and send to sea, in the first six months of any future War, a Naval Force equal to what every exertion of this Country could provide in double the time, our most valuable trade would probably fall into their hands—

hands—With our trade we should lose our Seamen, on whose return our chief dependence for resistance and success must rest, whenever this Country is involved in hostilities.—France was placed in a similar situation by our numerous captures at the commencement of the seven years War—It's effects were not recovered during the whole of that contest, and ultimately led to the destruction of her Navy, and the consequent loss of many valuable Colonies, which procured to this Country the glorious Peace of 1763—The recollection of that Peace still rankles in the mind of every Frenchman. Shall the noble spirit by which it was dictated cease to excite our emulation, while it remains an object of inveterate resentment to the Enemy, exasperated too by the Naval Triumphs and Colonial Conquests of the present War?

With respect to our Colonies, if we were not prepared to meet the French at sea, their expeditions might then proceed against them, with the certainty of not being intercepted on their passage, or molested in their operations; and it would require but a very inconsiderable proportion of the Land Forces, constantly at their disposal, to wrest our most valuable distant

possessions from the weak Garrisons by which they are defended on the Peace Establishment. — In less than one Campaign, all this might be effected, and such means of defence established *for their preservation*, as would render every future attempt to retake them abortive, should the French once acquire and maintain (though for a short period) that Naval superiority, which, in Peace or War, it must be our constant aim to prevent.

Should the projected aggrandizement of France be realized, an alteration would be effected in the state of affairs, and in the Balance of Power, which would expose this Country to the risk of having hereafter to support a War against that overgrown Republic, without the assistance or co-operation of any important Ally. In order to estimate the probability of this occurrence, we must consider, that, in the chain of political connexions and engagements, the Netherlands form the principal, and almost the only link, by which this Country can hold to the great Military Powers of the Continent. No less than England, they have *all a common*, and *some a specific* interest in the fate of these Provinces. To prevent France
from

from acquiring an irresistible military ascendancy—to procure a solid and substantial Peace—to preserve the balance of Power, are objects of general concern to all Europe. The dignity and permanent interests of the House of Austria are pressing motives for the Emperor not to relinquish his right of Sovereignty over this valuable part of his possessions. The Empire, and particularly the Northern parts of Germany, including a considerable portion of the Prussian territories, cannot be in any real state of security, if Holland and the Netherlands are under the same power as France. But, on the supposition, that the sovereignty and influence of France over these Countries should be established, and confirmed by a General Peace, what relative interests could exist between this Country and the King of Hungary? What mutual advantage and support could we then afford each other? What real grounds of efficient alliance, guarantee, or co-operation, useful to either party, would then remain? Certainly none. The Emperor might still be a great Power, with respect to Turkey or Prussia; but he could no longer have an influence to exercise, or an inclination to interfere, in the affairs

fairs and altercations of France and England. Prussia, at this moment, is, I am afraid, more disposed to form a close connexion with France than with this Country: But, even if no engagements should exist between them, is it to be supposed that the Court of *Berlin*, or any of the States of Germany, would form an alliance with England, or offer us their co-operation, whilst the frontier, which separates them from a Power infinitely superior in the numbers of its Armies, and every other military advantage, is open on their side, and defended on the side of the Enemy by the strongest works and positions of Art and Nature? With the example of the present War before their eyes, would it not be madness for any of them to engage in hostilities, which would not even afford a reasonable chance of preserving a respectable defensive posture? Nothing but the most unprovoked aggression could induce them to take up arms, and even then, perhaps, they would hesitate between the calamities an unavailing defence would draw on their territories, and the prospect of obtaining better terms by passive submission. We may therefore conclude, that necessity alone could induce any of these

these Powers to take an active part in a contest between England and France. But, admitting the supposition, that they were compelled to it by this or any other motive, the first consequences of it would certainly be, in some degree, favourable to us, as a Maritime Power, inasmuch as it would create a diversion to the Naval preparations of the Enemy, divide their attention and resources, and leave a less proportion of men disposable for the Sea service, or for distant expeditions. These advantages, however, would be more than counterbalanced by the too probable invasion of Germany, which, if attempted, could hardly fail to succeed, at least as far as would be necessary for cutting off our communication with the rivers *Ems*, *Weser*, and *Elbe*, and thereby depriving us of all intercourse with *Hamburg*, and the other Ports situated on those rivers, of which the effect would be more suddenly and deeply injurious to our Trade, than that of any other annoyance it could be exposed to, from the attempts of the Enemy.

It would be no less alarming as a political event, isolating us in a manner from Europe; and, in either point of view, it must be a matter

ter

ter of anxious consideration to every Englishman, who has ever turned his thoughts to commercial or political subjects—A movement of the Enemy, of the nature I have supposed, (and to which no real resistance could be made), would also be attended with the loss of *Hanover*—a loss, which, I know, it is much the fashion with a certain description of persons to speak of in the slightest terms, as trifling, and even desirable for England. It would be foreign to my purpose to examine the erroneous and inconsiderate opinions of those superficial Politicians, as they have been so often and successfully refuted, whenever they have been brought to a public discussion; but I must request of them to consider the great additional importance the Electorate would acquire by its near connection with the Ports and Rivers abovementioned.—As these Gentlemen indulge a hope that *Hanover* may be bartered away in the arrangements of a general Pacification, I must add, that any calculation to this effect, whatever advantage may be expected in return, is unworthy of an Englishman.—As long as we recollect that we invited the Sovereigns of that territory to the Crown of this Country, and
whilst

whilst we gratefully acknowledge the numerous blessings we have derived from their mild and beneficent Government, shall we basely abandon the inheritance of their Ancestors? No.—The House of *Brunswick*, in accepting our invitation, consigned the safety and preservation of its paternal dominions to the loyal and generous feelings of Englishmen, and History shall ever record that we have been faithful to the trust.

The question of the Cession of the *Netherlands* might be urged, on the principle of œconomy, as leading to an immediate termination of the War; but if, reverting to other considerations already adduced, we reflect how much, on the one hand, it would curtail our resources, and, on the other, force us from the pressing motive of *Security*, to increase our Peace Establishments, both military and naval, as well at home as in our foreign possessions; we shall find that, by a diminution of means, and an augmentation of expence, the consequence of saving a few millions at present, would be to expose ourselves to loss of credit, bankruptcy, and ruin hereafter.

H

It

It has been observed, that if the *Netherlands* are restored to the Emperor, he would not be able to retain them, for want of a Barrier of Fortified Towns opposite to that of France.—I feel the weight of the objection; but it may be overcome in various ways:—If the expence of re-establishing and defending the former line of Fortresses should be found too considerable; in that event, arrangements might be made between Austria and Holland, by which the *Meuse*, at least, might easily be rendered a most respectable Barrier for the preservation of Holland, and all the Countries behind that River.—This, I admit, would leave *Brabant* open to the incursions of the French; but its Sovereignty would not be in danger of being permanently lost.—The policy of Europe must be, *to oblige France to return within her former limits; to shew that, whatever extension of Territory she may subdue in the course of a War, other Powers possess sufficient vigour, energy, and resources, not to lay down their Arms, until it shall be completely restored.*

This is a great political *maxim*, that ought to be engraved in every State Cabinet of Europe, and to be inalterably impressed as a *lesson* on the
minds

minds of the Directors of the French Republic. Let this be effected, and Flanders will have a more solid Barrier than all the arts of Engineers can afford, and Europe a better Security for Peace than twenty Treaties, which one or the other Party always makes with a view of breaking, at some favourable, and perhaps not distant, period.

Savoy, the County of *Nice*, and the conquests of France on the side of Italy, are less important, in a commercial point of view, than as subservient to power, and to farther aggrandizement. In these respects, every general argument relative to the Netherlands is fully applicable to these acquisitions; the restoration of which we are, moreover, pledged to obtain by the Third Article of the Treaty between this Country and Sardinia, by which His Majesty engages “not to conclude a Peace with
“ the Enemy, without comprehending in it
“ the entire restitution to His Sardinian Majesty, of all the parts of his dominions
“ which belonged to him at the commencement of the War, and of which the Enemy
“ has obtained possession, or of which it may
“ hereafter obtain possession during the course

“ of hostilities. In return, His Sardinian
 “ Majesty will continue firmly and inseparably
 “ united and attached to the Common Cause,
 “ and to the interests of His Britannic Ma-
 “ jesty in this War, not only for so long a
 “ time as the War may last in Italy, or in the
 “ Southern parts of France, but until the con-
 “ clusion of Peace between Great Britain and
 “ France.”

Strictly observing this engagement, and rely-
 ing on our good faith, the King of Sardinia
 has refused the Mediation of Spain; and, under
 the pressure of the severest calamities, continues
 faithful to the Common Cause, with a perseve-
 rance honourable to himself, and to the charac-
 ter of Great Britain.

I firmly believe, and sincerely lament, that
 the present Government of France is resolved
 to listen to no Negotiation for the restoration
 either of *Savoy* or the *Netherlands*. With this
 disposition, can we hesitate on the vigorous
 prosecution of the War? Shall the rage of
 Aggrandizement be more successful than the
 rage of Subversion?—Are French Conquests to
 complete the Revolution which French Prin-
 ciples had begun? The Jacobin Club is dis-
 persed,

perfed, but the dregs of it have unfortunately been raifed to the Directory. In this fupreme fituation, are they become the Arbiters of the terms; and the Guardians of the repofe, of Europe? Have not their Rights of Conqueft the fame origin as their Rights of Man? The latter ftrike at the root of Individual, and the former of National happinefs and tranquillity. The latter fubvert the principles of private Property, and eftablifh Anarchy, Equality, and Violence, on the deftruction of the Laws, Diftinctions, and Reftraints, of civilized Society. The former fet afide the Laws of Nations, the Obligations of Treaties, the Sovereignty of Independent States, and dictate, with the point of the fword, fuch terms as uncontrouled Ambition may fuggelt, and paffive Mifery muft receive, to ftay for a moment the torrent of Rapine, Plunder, and Carnage.

Born and nurtured amidft thefe fcenes, is it aftonifhing that the French Republic fhould trace its origin to the *Rights of Man*, and pretend to derive fupport and folidity from the *Rights of Conqueft*?

It is a difpofition natural to every well-difpofed and feeling mind, to be fanguine in the
proſpect

prospect of any event, which must, in a high degree, conduce to meliorate the situation of our Fellow-creatures, and to promote the happiness of our Country. Peace would so materially contribute to both these ends, that the best-intentioned, though not, perhaps, the most considerate men, over anxious to attain this object, are apt to be led astray by every incoherent shadow—Let them be on their guard, lest, losing sight of the substance, in the eagerness of their pursuit, they should push on, regardless of other considerations, until it will be too late to recede; until sensible of their mistake, but closely pressed on every side by the giddy and thoughtless multitude, ever ready to follow their illusive wanderings, they can no longer escape themselves, or rescue their falling Country from the abyss of degradation which is open before them. Let them come forward at the present critical emergency, and boldly avow their determination to give their assent and support to no conditions of Peace, which do not stipulate the restitution of all the Conquests made by France in Europe.—Have they hitherto discovered any disposition in the Enemy to negotiate on these grounds?

Does

Does not the intelligence of every day bring fresh proofs of the reverse? To the many I have already adduced, I must here add one unequivocal and official, which may be found in the following Paper, printed in English at *Paris*.

“ A Letter from *London* mentions, that the
 “ KING, compelled by the wish of the People,
 “ has declared to Parliament that he has no
 “ objection to make Peace with the French
 “ Republic.

“ If the British Ministry do not deceive
 “ the People, and their desire for Peace be
 “ sincere, it will be an easy matter to con-
 “ clude it.

“ It is held for certain, that our Govern-
 “ ment, deeply impressed with the proofs of
 “ affection held out by the People of England
 “ towards the French Nation, would insist
 “ on no other satisfaction or indemnification,
 “ *than the respective restitution of the French*
 “ *and Dutch Settlements which are now in the*
 “ *hands of the English*; and would require
 “ nothing more of the British Ministry, *than*
 “ *that they should not interfere with the Internal*
 “ *Government*

“ Government of France and Holland, nor in
 “ their War with their Neighbours.

“ The French Government, in professing
 “ such *amicable dispositions*, only act up to the
 “ principles they have so often testified, of
 “ wishing to live in peace and *fraternity* with
 “ the people of England, indulging the fond
 “ hope, that a perfect harmony between both
 “ Nations would conduce to the happiness of
 “ all Mankind.”

This arrogant Declaration, it may be observed, has long been published.—I know it; but until it appeared by the letter from Citizen *Fonsenberte*, the French National Commissioner in *Holland*, to Citizen *Beisselier*, *Chargé d’Affaires* of the Republic at *Bremen*, and from other channels of information, that it was prepared by the French Government, and circulated by the Ministers of the Republic in foreign residences, I could only consider it as the unmeaning insolence of a *Jacobin* Newspaper, and not in the light I now do, as an official Answer to the King’s Message, since it is the only Paper in which His Majesty’s pacific disposition has been expressly noticed.

The

The Emperor and the Empire, we are assured, are resolved to listen to no Negotiation, but on the principles of the *Status quo ante Bellum* ; whilst, on the other hand, the Directory, and all it's subordinate Agents, take every opportunity of declaring, that the *Austrian Netherlands* are so irrecoverably acquired to France, as not even to be made the subject matter of Negotiation.—To which of these principles is Great Britain to subscribe ?—On the issue of this great question depends the Pacification of Europe.

Having fairly stated the only terms, with respect to the Continent of Europe, on which a substantial and honourable Peace can be concluded, and the difficulties by which it is likely to be retarded, I shall proceed briefly to investigate the relative situations of England, France, and Holland, in the East and West Indies, (including in the former the *Cape of Good Hope*) with a view to the same results.

Having reduced all the French Settlements on the Continent of *Asia*, and masters as we are of the *Cape* and *Trincomalé*, with a superior Naval Force, I may fairly assume, that should the present War be protracted, we shall remain
I invulnerable

invulnerable in that quarter, and that, whatever is recovered to the Enemy of our present Conquests, or of those we may hereafter make, must be so by the result of Negotiation.— This being the case, it will only be necessary to consider the situation of our Indian Empire, and to compare the objects we have in view in that quarter, with the claims and pretensions of the French and Dutch, in order distinctly to draw the line between what may eventually be restored, in return for concessions of equal importance in Europe, (if they cannot otherwise be obtained) and what can never be given up, without sacrificing or endangering the dearest interests and concerns of this Country.

The nature of the English Empire in India being generally known, I shall confine myself to remark, that the undisturbed and secure enjoyment of the *Sovereignty* we have acquired over those immense and valuable Provinces, must be our first object, to which even our *Commerce* becomes a secondary consideration ; As long as we can preserve the former, there cannot be a doubt but the latter will continue gradually improving and increasing : But should our *Sovereignty* be lost, not only the greatest
part

part of our Commerce, but the numerous other channels through which India contributes to the prosperity and grandeur of this Country, would be annihilated; and it might then be truly said, that the *Sun of Great Britain was set for ever*. To watch every opportunity, and to seize every means of adding to the solidity and stability of our Indian Empire, is therefore unquestionably the first consideration for the British Government in that quarter of the world; and with this view, it is their indispensable duty to place it, as far as human foresight can effect, out of the reach of any rival European Power. Whoever admits these premises, must, at the same time, admit, that the Settlement of the *Cape* is the most important acquisition which could be made by Great Britain. From it's situation, it may truly be called the key of India. No European Power can entertain a reasonable expectation of sending to that distant part of the world an Expedition sufficiently formidable to threaten the safety of our Establishments there, unless it should be previously possessed of the facility of refitting and obtaining refreshments at some intermediate point on it's passage.

No Power, in actual hostility with Great Britain, can enjoy this advantage, as long as we shall retain the *Cape* and *St. Helena*; and although a Fleet might reach India without touching at either of these possessions, it would be so disabled and unfit for active operations, as, almost to a certainty, to allow us the time necessary for taking such steps as might render the intentions for which it was sent unattainable, before any effort could be made for carrying them into execution.—By the addition of the *Cape* and *Trincomalé* to our present establishments, it appears to me, that we should possess every requisite that prudence can suggest, as necessary to the permanent safety, tranquillity, and prosperity of our Eastern Territories.

It may be asked, whether, in the event of a favourable turn of affairs in Europe, under which the United Provinces might again become our Ally, it would not be just and politic to relinquish an arrangement which tends to deprive them of these valuable Settlements?—My answer is, that whenever the Netherlands shall be recovered, either by the result of Negotiation, or by the progress of the Austrian Arms,

Arms, the Dutch will then be liberated from the tyrannic yoke of the French, and, ceasing to become our Enemies, may, in the course of political events, renew their union and friendship with this Country.—But let us suppose this happy change of affairs actually to have taken place, I have no hesitation to say, that even under that contingency, the interest of the United Provinces, well understood, would induce them to cede the *Cape* and *Trincomalé* to England.

The connections of Holland in the East Indies are, and must be, confined to commercial pursuits. She has neither the means to acquire, nor to preserve an Empire. Every establishment which has not for its object to improve or protect her trade, is an unnecessary and ruinous expence. Such were the *Cape* and *Trincomalé* to the Dutch East India Company. No valuable part of their trade with India was immediately derived from those Settlements, which, from their nature and situation, are highly subservient to power and protection, and in no respect conducive to the extension of commercial enterprize. They will at all times be rather a burden, than a direct source of revenue

venue, to the State which may possess them; and if this consideration was not over-ruled by others of greater weight, it might be rather desirable than otherwise, that these Conquests should be replaced under the dominion of Holland, as soon as our alliance with that Country could be re-established; but, in that case, the Dutch would not be possessed of sufficient means to render them secure.

France is the only State whose rivalry and power can be dangerous to us in the East. As long as Holland shall remain under her dominion, or even her Ally, our own safety requires that these important Posts should be in our Possession, in order that the advantages they afford may not be turned against us; and whenever Holland shall enter into friendly engagements with us, and will thereby be more or less exposed to follow our fortunes in the event of a rupture with France, the safety and protection of her own possessions in the East will require that the *Cape* and *Trincomalé*, as the great bulwarks of the whole, should be under the dominion of Great Britain, because it is not in the power of the Dutch Government

to

to supply them with proper Garrisons, and other adequate means of defence.

In short, the distant Possessions of Holland cannot stand by themselves. They must owe their security to the assistance either of France or England. If France be her Ally, a due attention to our own preservation forbids us to part with the *Cape* and *Trincomalé*. If England be her Ally, these possessions, in our Hands, will afford an efficient protection, instead of occasioning any detriment or diminution to her Trade, and, to our mutual advantage, will enable us successfully to oppose any hostile efforts of the common Enemy in that part of the World.

The insignificant defence made by the *Cape* and *Trincomalé*, are strong proofs that the Dutch, unassisted, are incapable of maintaining a contest in the East with France or England; and, indeed, I cannot advert to this circumstance, to the general belief which prevailed in Europe of the weak and unprovided state of these Settlements, and to the no less general knowledge of the vast advantage an active and powerful Enemy might derive from them in a contest with us, without feeling greatly astonished that,
not

not only they never attracted the notice of the French during the two years of the present War, during which Holland was engaged in the Coalition as our Ally, but that no precaution appears to have been taken to prevent their falling into our hands, when the Invasion of Holland obliged us to undertake their reduction.

I cannot mention this unaccountable instance of supineness or ignorance on the part of an Enemy, whose operations, in general, have been ably concerted and skilfully conducted, without noticing, at the same time, the active and provident measures of Administration, and congratulating my Country on their happy results.

It is highly probable that *Batavia, Malacca, Cochin, Amboyna*, and nearly all the other Dutch Settlements in India, are before this time reduced under the British dominion. It is a question of too much delicacy for me to discuss, whether it will be politic and necessary to restore them all to the Dutch, and to give back *Pondicherry* and the French Factories to France. The arrangements, in this respect, will depend very much on the circumstances of the War,
and

and many political events which may occur before any Negotiation can be entered upon and concluded. Should their restitution be necessary, and compensated by equivalent advantages, obtained to ourselves or our Allies in some other quarter, I conceive they may be restored, and even, according to circumstances, rendered of more weight in the scale of Negotiation by liberal commercial arrangements, without disgrace, or real danger to the leading, substantial, and permanent interests of this Country in India; but this, however, is a point on which I by no means pretend to give a positive opinion—but I do most positively affirm, that no arrangement ought to be admitted by this Country, which does not leave us in possession of the *Cape* and *Trincomalé*. They will add nothing to the resources of the powerful Empire we possess, but infinitely to its security.—The Enemy, on the contrary, having no Sovereignty to preserve in India, can only value them as instruments to undermine and destroy ours.

Should they be put in possession of these advantages, their future attempts might and would probably fail of success; but why place the

K

weapons

weapons in their hands, and thereby invite them to the attack ?

The case of absolute necessity is the only justifiable answer can be given to this question, and it is the only consideration to which the spirit of the Country should submit when points of such magnitude are at stake.

The discussion of future arrangements in the East Indies, arising out of the present circumstances of the War, is rendered clear and precise by the great distinction existing between the interests, and the relative situations of this Country, and of the Enemy, in that quarter.—I cannot allow myself to suppose, that Administration is not fully aware of the leading principles by which my observations have been guided, or that they will for a moment lose sight of them, whenever they shall become the subject of Negotiation.—With this satisfactory impression on my mind, I could wish to terminate this investigation ; but the nature of it obliges to meet the more arduous task of hazarding a few observations on the State of the War, and of the expectations this Country may form with respect to the West Indies.

In

In this quarter the conduct of the French has been directed, not to useful conquests, but to devastation—Here they have been unremittingly and too successfully employed in schemes of destruction—Here they have established a Policy and Government, founded upon principles incompatible with the safety and tranquillity of adjoining Colonies; principles which, in the opinion of every man acquainted with the European Settlements in the West Indies, must, in the course of a few years, infallibly lead to their total subversion, unless the French can be compelled by force, or induced by negotiation to relinquish those Principles, and to place the possessions they may retain under regulations of a similar tendency and effect with those which prevail in the Colonies of other Powers, instead of industriously persisting in their present plans of spreading immediate, unconditional emancipation, equality, and revolt through all the islands, which have hitherto flourished under a system so directly opposite. My object here is to state facts, and not to examine the question of the Slave Trade or the Slave Laws.—Considering them as outrages on human nature, I sincerely hope that, when the

present ferment shall have subsided, the wisdom of the Legislature will devise some means of gradually abolishing these evils; but certainly the most prejudiced opponent of the barbarous practice I now condemn will admit, that the revolutionary expedients by which the French restore slaves to freedom are more to be apprehended at this moment, and pregnant with greater prospective calamities, than can possibly arise from the continuance of this unnatural power over our fellow creatures.

This circumstance of the Enemy's behaviour is a most serious obstacle to the possibility of any satisfactory arrangement with respect to the West Indies.—The first difficulty, in that quarter, will not be to settle a line of demarcation, and to determine between what conquests *may* be restored, and what *must* be retained, but to eradicate destructive principles, and to prevent proceedings, which, from their dangerous tendency, and contaminating example, cannot be continued under the sanction and countenance of the French Government, even with *p. etc.* islands subject to their sovereignty, without exposing those of other Powers to the same ruinous consequences.

It

It is impossible to consider the present period of the War, the unparalleled misfortunes of our West India expeditions, the immense British property involved in West India speculations, the actual state of our islands, and the apparently desperate resolution of the Enemy not to depart from their abominable pursuits, without feeling the most alarming concern.—We must not deceive ourselves as to the extent of the object, or of the danger. It is by a just knowledge of the one, and a full sense of the other, that we may hope successfully to meet by far the greatest difficulties which contribute to retard a Pacification.

The truly calamitous outset of the West India Expedition, arising from a series of untoward events; which no human Power could foresee or controul, has considerably diminished the prospect of advantages, which, under less adverse circumstances, might reasonably have been expected from the ensuing campaign.—Our situation and advantages, however, may still be materially ameliorated and improved before the season for active operations is over, should the weather cease to baffle our efforts, and allow our gallant Troops and their
skilful

skilful Commanders to exert against the common Enemy the same admirable zeal and spirit, as have induced them to persevere in their laudable attempt to resist and subdue the ungovernable rage of the elements. In the present posture of affairs, I frankly own that it appears to me impossible to suggest any arrangement likely to lead to a satisfactory and safe result.—After the most minute and anxious consideration, no expedient immediately practicable has occurred to me, which is not replete with the most imminent danger. Until the issue of the Campaign shall be known, he must be a bold, and even a rash man, who will take upon himself the Responsibility of restoring Peace to the West Indies, upon terms consistent with their future preservation and security.—The only assistance I can presume to offer is, to point out the numerous rocks on which he may split; but it must be his own business to erect the beacons which may serve to guide the vessel into a safe port.

In the Leeward Islands, *Guadalupe* and *St. Lucia* are occupied by a horde of *Banditti*, who can hardly be said to be completely under the Government of the French Republic; and
this

this circumstance, in fact, renders them more dangerous, as it leaves less hope of an amelioration in the posture of affairs, in case a pacific system, or any other favourable occurrence arising in France; should induce her to discountenance their barbarous proceedings; to which, however, she appears firmly resolved to give her most strenuous assistance and support.

This odious disposition of the French Government may be collected from the Article of their new Constitution, granting *Liberty* and *Equality* to the Negroes; from the sentiments manifested in the Message of the Directory on the subject of the Colonies; and the Proclamation General *Lavaux* has lately published at *St. Domingo*, in conformity, no doubt, to their instructions.

These public Acts are so many unequivocal proofs of their firm resolution to establish *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity* in the West Indies.—In conformity to the solemn pledge of their disposition in this respect given, to the Negroes by the new Constitution, *Lavaux* emphatically calls upon *Citizens of all Colours*,
 “ to enjoy these inestimable Benefits, to follow
 “ the Example of their Brethren in France,
 “ to

“ to share in their successes, and to consider
 “ themselves all as Children of the same Re-
 “ public, which has declared the Colonies
 “ integral parts of it's forces, and that nothing
 “ could dissolve her Indivisibility.”

These Declarations, and the preparations
 made in France for enabling *Lavaux, Victor*
Hugues, and their Associates, to execute their
 further plans of Devastation, leave no hope
 that the Enemy will retract, or voluntarily
 crush the principles, which threaten destruc-
 tion to the West Indies—They have already
 reached and laid waste two of our valuable
 Islands, and several others are under the daily
 apprehension of the same calamities.

Forming my judgment from experience, the
 communications of the most intelligent Mer-
 chants and Planters, and the opinions of Naval
 and Military Characters, well acquainted with
 the Leeward Islands, I feel impressed with a
 conviction, that there can be no real and per-
 manent security for our possessions or trade
 in that quarter, until *Guadaloupe* and *St. Lucia*
 shall be wrested from the hands of the Enemy;
 or until the Association, at present prevailing
 in those Islands, of Revolutionary Assassins,
 Pirates,

Pirates, and Plunderers of every description, shall be superseded by some regular system of interior policy, possessed of authority to enforce the observance of the general laws of civilized nations, and of the local usages and practices applicable to the peculiar nature of the West India Colonies; and equally observed by all, as necessary to their existence and preservation. I have procured the opinions of many persons supposed to be most competent to decide on the accuracy of this alarming observation, and every one has uniformly concurred in every part of it. *Martinique* unquestionably is a military Post of the greatest importance, and, as such, may provide for it's own safety, but unfortunately we have sufficient proof that it cannot afford an adequate protection to all the British Islands of the *Charibbean* Sea, against the Enemy at present occupying *Guadaloupe* and *St. Lucia*.—The situation of these two last Islands is particularly conducive and favourable to the success of their present Warfare; and the latter is, moreover, possessed of an Harbour, which adds greatly to the importance of it's situation.—*Martinique*, however, as a productive and well-cultivated Colony, is a

L

valuable

valuable acquisition, and, as a Fortrefs, of the utmost confequence; but we muft not forget that it's ftrong works are an unavailing barrier againft revolutionary meafures.—A complete change of difpofition in the Enemy, or their total expulfion, can alone prevent the continuance of thefe calamities.—The execution of this laft mentioned enterprize, fhould it be undertaken, will be materially affifted by the poffeffion of *Martinique*—Had it been in the hands of the French, the difafters, at prefent confined to *Grenada* and *St. Vincent's*, would inevitably have been extended to all our Settlements—As long as *Martinique* fhall remain a British Colony, it will give us a facility for recovering any of our former poffeffions, which the Enemy, in their predatory incursions, may have entirely, or in part, reduced under their dominion.—On the fuppofition that, with the return of Peace, the French, from neceffity, intereft, or inclination, fhould renounce their destructive proceedings; and that, in the event of a future rupture, their operations in the Weft Indies would be conducted upon the principles adopted by civilized nations, *Martinique* becomes an object of the utmoft confequence

sequence to this Country, either with a view to offensive measures, or for the establishment of a solid system of defence. If *Guadeloupe* and *St. Lucia* cannot be reconquered and preserved, it would be the only point in that *Archipelago*, capable of such resistance, as might afford us time, either to come to it's relief, or to put our other Colonies in a respectable state of defence.

The natural inferences to be drawn from this statement are, that to restore *Martinique* to the French would be virtually to give up to them all our *Charibbee* Islands.—That the possession of this Colony, without *Guadaloupe* and *St. Lucia*, might afford a reasonable degree of security to the British Settlements, if the operations of the Enemy should be directed to views of ~~useful~~ conquest, instead of savage devastation.—That should they, as appears probable, persist in this last mode of Warfare, there can be no alternative between the reduction of the two Islands from which it is carried on, and the imminent risk of seeing it gradually extended to all our possessions, and successively involving them in subversion, plunder, and ruin.

In *Jamaica* we have the same dangers to guard against from *St. Domingo*, as in the Charibbee Islands from *Guadaloupe* and *St. Lucia* — This most valuable Colony, by the protection it derives from *Cape Nicolas Mole*, from our superior Naval Force, and it's own means of Defence, may be considered as perfectly secure against any hostile attempt the Enemy could make, during the present War, with a view to it's reduction; but if, at the Peace, we should abandon to the French our Posts in *St. Domingo*, and should suffer them to retain the *Spanish*, in addition to their former possessions in that Island, the situation of *Jamaica* would then become extremely precarious and insecure. Should the French be able and willing to re-establish Order and good Government in *St. Domingo*, *Jamaica*, I admit, would have nothing to apprehend, as long as Peace and good Understanding could be preserved between France and England; but at the renewal of hostilities, it is not improbable that the loss of that Colony might be the first result of a Pacification, by which the French would be reinstated in the Posts at present occupied

occupied by the British at *St. Domingo*, and allowed the undisturbed possession of the *Spanish* part of the Island.—Such were probably their views and pretensions in concluding a Peace with Spain, in which the interests of this Country were certainly not consulted.

How far this concession may be found an obstacle to the Cessation of Hostilities, I cannot pretend to determine; but the dignity and interest of this Country certainly require that that we should not inconsiderately give up Ports of such vast importance as *Cape Nicolas Mole*, become a party to this violation of the Treaty of *Utrecht*, and submit to an arrangement which would give the French a decided and dangerous superiority in that quarter.

I will not anticipate the consequences of a Treaty, which, without imposing any restraint on the revolutionary proceedings of the French in *St. Domingo*, would leave them the entire sovereignty of that Island; because, I trust, no man will presume so far to disregard the experience of recent calamities, and the just apprehensions of our own Settlements, as to purchase Peace on such terms, unless he shall
be

be really compelled to it, by the most disastrous and hitherto unforeseen events.

I have not adverted to the immense advantages England would derive from the possession of *St. Domingo*; because, in investigating our West India interests with a reference to the existing prospects of Peace, I have confined my enquiry to the apparent posture of affairs at the present moment—It is such, in my opinion, as affords neither the means of advantageous Negotiation, nor of permanent Security; but the Campaign is not yet so far advanced, or the state of our Expeditions so desperate, as to preclude a reasonable hope of acquiring, in the course of this year, both those desirable objects, and of rendering the West Indies no less subservient than the East, to the attainment of an honourable and advantageous Peace for ourselves, and our Allies in Europe, and to the future grandeur and prosperity of this Country.

I have hitherto remained silent on the subject of *Corfica*; because I freely confess I am not sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances and importance of this Acquisition, to be prepared to give any opinion on the subject.—If
it

it affords us an advantageous port in the Mediterranean, an influence with the Powers, and a beneficial participation in the trade of the Levant and Italy, and, if from His Majesty's acceptance of the *Corfican* Crown, it cannot be restored without disgrace, I hope the interest and honour of Great Britain will determine His Majesty's Ministers to insist on the preservation of that island, as one of the conditions of peace. On the other hand, should its importance in the scale of negotiation be estimated by the latter consideration only, I trust that some expedient will be suggested for conciliating the dignity of Great Britain with the necessity of terminating as soon as possible the calamities of War.

I cannot conclude these observations without noticing an article in the Official Journal of the French Directory, in which, speaking of their political situation, an intimation is given of the probability of a counter-alliance being opposed to the existing Coalition of England and the two Imperial Courts. The words are, "*A l'exterieur, une Guerre qui menace le Nord de l'Europe; une contre-alliance qui*"

peut

“ *peut-être sous peu sera opposée à la Coalition*
 “ *que nous avons à combattre.*”

The expectation of such an occurrence may perhaps support the hopes and insolent pretensions of the Directory ; but if *Sweden* should become so entirely the venal instrument of France, if *Prussia* should be inclined to sacrifice her dignity, the constitutional integrity of the Empire, and her own permanent interests, to the unworthy motive of thwarting and opposing the plans and just expectations of the Emperor, or to the illusive promises of France. —If Spain, from the influence of French councils, or other ill-judged motives, should also give assistance to this unnatural and monstrous Alliance, it may contribute to protract and extend the calamities of War, but not to compel *England*, *Austria*, and *Russia*, to ignominious submission. Europe may then behold with astonishment the Chiefs of the House of *Bourbon*, and the Family of Orange, wandering in exile, whilst the usurped governments of their Assassins and Persecutors receive aid and support from the *Spanish* and *Prussian* Monarchies,

Whatever

Whatever motives the French Government may have for refusing to acquiesce in the universal anxiety for Peace, it is some consolation for us, in looking forward to the inevitable continuance of the War, to indulge a reasonable expectation, that, in the course of the ensuing campaign, the situation of England and of its Allies will be improved, and the means of negotiation encreased.—The late rapid successes of the Austrians—their vigorous preparations for opening the campaign—the effectual assistance which the final adjustment of the partition of *Poland* may enable Russia to afford—the favorable intelligence expected from the East Indies—the probability of some effectual efforts being still made in the West—the embarrassed situation of the Enemy—the spirit of desertion prevalent in their armies, and of discontent in the interior.—All these circumstances continue to justify the prospect of a rapid amelioration in our relative situations, which may lead to a more speedy and satisfactory arrangement than any premature proposals, which the Enemy, in their present disposition, would consider as proofs of weakness, approaching to submission.

M

I will

I will not calculate the probability of obtaining better terms than those I have now suggested, or the chance of favourable Revolutions which might arise from great but not impossible events, in the present state of France, (such as the triumph of the Royalist, or Moderate Party) as motives for continuing the War; but I mention them as considerations not entirely to be disregarded under the impossibility of a Peace.

I have now stated the terms from which I conceive we cannot depart without risking our own security—the protection we owe to our commerce and distant possessions—without breaking our engagements with our Allies, and thereby forfeiting our ascendancy in Europe, the dignity and character of the nation, and every advantage derived from internal happiness and foreign consideration.

The Statesman whose good fortune it may be to restore the blessings of Peace on these terms, will not feel a more sincere joy than I shall, in the attainment of this happy event—Here will begin the contrast between the effects of a provident Administration, bringing a most difficult contest to a happy issue
by

by the ordinary resources of industry and freedom, by the persevering support of a spirited People, by the regular supplies of Credit;—and the destructive power of a Revolutionary Government, obtaining by confiscation and terror what confidence and public spirit could not supply, and making the lives, the liberty, and the possessions of every individual the sport of its caprices, or the instruments of its ambition.—To augment individual and thereby add to public Prosperity, to extend our Commerce, to improve our Industry, to reduce our National Debt, to raise our Credit—such will be the easy and pleasing cares of the British Administration; whilst that of France will have the wide extended scene of private and national Distress, Bankruptcy, Stagnation of Trade, Destruction of Industry and Capitals, constantly before its eyes, without the means of ministering relief to the wants of its suffering subjects, or providing for the expences of the State. The wretched and divided Citizens of France will then attempt, by heterogeneous attributes and unavailing props, to give consistency and support to the tottering monument of their Con-

stitution, raised by the hands of Regicides, and cemented by the blood of Innocence; while Englishmen will emulate with each other in strengthening that venerable Fabric from which our happiness is derived—More than a century has now elapsed since one short storm swept from around its pillars the last corroding vapours of despotic Power; but in France the most violent hurricanes follow each other in rapid succession, and instead of purifying its less fortunate atmosphere, appear only to engender fresh clouds of misery and oppression.

May England thus be an example, and France a warning to Europe!

February 2, 1796.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE observations I have presumed to offer to the Public, on the disposition of the Enemy, were sent to the Press before the Intelligence of the important and extraordinary Message which appears to have been sent by the French Directory to the Council of Antients, on the 24th of January, had reached this Country.

In calling upon my Readers to remark the exact Coincidence of the Sentiments and Views, emphatically announced in this Message, with the Dispositions I have ascribed to the restless and ambitious Governors of the French Republic, I am not afraid that they will suspect me of obtruding upon their patience for the unworthy purpose of deriving credit from the observation.—On the contrary, without a reference to my former opinions, my exultation at the approach to Peace would have been as truly sincere as my regret is now deeply felt at the increased Prospect of the continuance of the War. This Message cannot fail to excite the attention of Parliament, in the interesting Debate which will probably take place on Mr. Grey's intended Motion for Peace.—I do
not

not pretend to anticipate the Observations and Declarations to which it may give rise, and much less to scrutinize the Secrets of State, or to dive into the Mysteries of the Cabinet; but, I own, I shall be much astonished if it should appear that the Directory has, agreeably to its assertion, offered any specific Terms of Peace to the Coalesced Powers.—Perhaps this assertion alludes to the answer given to the Emperor's Proposal, made through the Court of *Denmark*—to the Decrees by which *Savoy* and the *Netherlands* are united to France—to the constitutional Article which enumerates all their former Colonies as integral Parts of the Republic, *One and Indivisible*;—to their arrogant Declaration on the subject of the King's Message.—Or more probably to all these separate pretensions, comprized under the general description of “*Conditions as moderate as the National Dignity will admit of.*”

Is it for these Conditions that another Campaign is to be undertaken?—that the Directory calls upon it's devoted slaves to return to the “*blood-stained Plains of War?*”

If no other terms have been offered, it is natural to imply that such are their pretensions. They leave us no alternative. The certainty
of

of an unsuccessful Campaign would be preferable to immediate submission on such Terms.—Perseverance, even under Defeat, by exhausting the last inadequate resources of the Enemy, would render Moderation necessary.—It is not, however, this perseverance that will be required; on the contrary, the situation of affairs affords a reasonable expectation that the events of the ensuing Campaign will enable us to accomplish our irrevocable resolution, to restore the Balance of Power; to remain faithful to our engagements; to support the National Character; to do justice to the present, and to discharge our Duty to all future, Generations.

As I have no other object than to point out the Sentiments of the French Directory with respect to Peace, I shall not enter into a further examination of this Message; but I cannot help noticing their avowal that the Republic is *not* “*possessed of any representative Signs of Exchange.*” What is become of *Thirty Millions* of *Assignats*? Were they not mortgaged upon all the National Domains which they represented? Has not a Paper Currency, unlimited in it's amount, been hitherto the medium of all exchanges, and the source of all the terrific Power of France?

France?—Six Months ago it was their boast, that their pecuniary resources were superior to those of all Europe; and now they complain of the *total Absence of the representative Signs of Exchange!*—They have at last learned by experience, that Money can only be the common medium of exchange, by being the common measure of all exchangeable Articles. All other Representatives, not possessed of an intrinsic Value, come under the description of *Credit*, and can only be permanently supported by a confidence in the uninterrupted facility of exchanging them for the real Value for which they are issued and received. After the avowal of this Message, who can doubt that the resource of the Assignats is annihilated? This Alteration in the State of their Affairs will lead more rapidly to a safe and honourable Peace than all the Austrian Victories on the Rhine, of which it is perhaps a principal pre-disposing cause, requiring, in it's turn, to be aided and accelerated by the speedy opening of another Campaign, which will prove, I trust, as brilliant, as the Conclusion of the last.

February 5, 1796.

